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Saffron Walden  
BOROUGH OF  
SAFFRON WALDEN

IN THE  
ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF ESSEX

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THE  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

of the  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
for the year

1947



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## PREFACE

TO THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE SAFFRON WALDEN BOROUGH  
COUNCIL.

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report for the year 1947.

The Registrar General's estimate of the population for the year was 7,025. This represents an increase of 701 on the estimate for 1939. During the the period between 1939 and 1947, there was an increase of 110 inhabited houses, according to the Rate Books.

The Birth Rate for the year was 19.8—an increase of more than 80 per cent on the average rate for the five pre-war years.

As pointed out in previous reports, the increased Birth Rate is the most reliable guide to the position with regard to the housing shortage, indicating as it does, an increasing necessity for houses which will afford accommodation for growing families.

The number of Infectious Diseases notified during the year was low. Two mild cases of Acute Poliomyelitis occurred during the general prevalence of that disease, but neither patient developed paralysis, or required orthopædic treatment.

S. R. RICHARDSON,

*Medical Officer of Health.*

# STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area: 7,502 Acres.

Population (Registrar General's estimate of resident population 1947): 7,025.

Number of inhabited houses (end of 1947) according to Rate Books: 2,038.

Rateable value £40,718.

Sum represented by a penny rate: £161.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR (corrections being made for inward and outward transfers):—

LIVE BIRTHS	{	Legitimate	...	120	70	58	}	Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population 19.8.
		Illegitimate	...	11	4	7		
STILL BIRTHS	{	Legitimate	...	0	0	0	}	Rate per 1,000 total births (live and stillbirths) 7.14.
		Illegitimate	...	1	1	0		

The Birth Rate for the year was higher than the Rate for the previous year (15.8). The average Rate for the five pre-war years was 10.7.

DEATHS	...	...	...	110	50	60	{	Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population 15.6.
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DEATHS from puerperal causes:—

From puerperal sepsis, 0.

From other puerperal causes, 0.

Total, 0.

DEATHS of infants under one year of age	{	Legitimate	8	}	Total 8.
		Illegitimate	0		

DEATH RATE of Infants under one year of age:—

All infants per 1,000 live births, 57.5.

# DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGES:—

	No. in district	Outward Transfers	Inward Transfers	Those which apply to district
Under 1 year ... ..	10	2	0	8
1 and under 2 ... ..	0	0	0	0
2 " " 5 ... ..	0	0	1	1
5 " " 15 ... ..	1	1	0	0
15 " " 25 ... ..	0	0	0	0
25 " " 35 ... ..	2	0	1	3
35 " " 45 ... ..	6	4	1	3
45 " " 55 ... ..	6	0	1	7
55 " " 65 ... ..	10	3	2	9
65 " " 75 ... ..	42	12	3	33
75 and over ... ..	71	29	4	46
<b>TOTAL ... ..</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>110</b>

Deaths from Measles (all ages) ... ..	0
" " Whooping Coughs (all ages) ... ..	1
" " Diarrhoea, under two years... ..	0
" " Cancer ... ..	20

There was no excessive mortality from any particular disease during the year.

## GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Laboratory Service.*—Bacteriological Laboratory Service: The Essex County Council's Scheme serves this district, specimens being sent to St. Margaret's Hospital, Epping. Samples of milk are examined by the Essex Institute of Agriculture, Writtle.

*Ambulance Facilities.*—Considerable difficulty was experienced with regard to the provision of an adequate and reliable ambulance service in the post-war period. During the war years ambulance work had been enormously increased, but, in addition to the two ambulances provided jointly by the two Local Authorities, a third was at that time loaned by the British Red Cross Organization, while cars were obtainable from the Voluntary Car Pool, and in emergency from the A.R.P. Headquarters.

In post-war years it became evident that the increase was a permanent one, but for a time no vehicles were available except the two original ambulances. An ambulance then provided at St. James' Hospital by the County Council, for the conveyance of maternity cases to that hospital, gave some relief. But the lack of an associated car service proved a serious disadvantage.

A whole-time ambulance officer was appointed by the Local Authorities, and as far as possible arrangements were made to provide him with part-time assistance. It was found, however, that such assistance was rarely available at short notice.

The National Health Service Act, 1946, laid on the Local Health Authority (Essex County Council) the duty of providing, after an appointed day, all future ambulance services, and any "sitting-case" car services which may be required for the proper administration of this part of the Act. Health Authorities were advised to keep in mind that the demand for ambulance transport would grow once the Act came into operation.

*Water.*—There were no extensions of water mains except those to the housing sites at Sheds Lane and Ashdon Road.

The water continued to be of the highest standard of organic and bacterial purity. Hardness was not excessive.

*Drainage and Sewerage.*—There were no extensions of sewers other than those required for the development of the new housing sites.

The Scheme for the provision of new Sewage Works, which had been proposed before the outbreak of war, was the subject of further consideration throughout the year. An important difficulty was the absolute uncertainty as to the ultimate size of town for which provision should be made. It seemed possible that, in view of the expense of future enlargement or duplication, municipal expansion would be limited to a large extent by services regarded as adequate for present needs.

*Baths*—Structural improvements, including the installation of filtration and chlorination plants, were approved in 1938, but progress in this direction was still impossible.



*Housing.*—Work on the Council's housing programme, though impeded by the limited supply of materials and labour, showed fair progress after the abnormal weather conditions in the early months of the year, and the first 25 permanent houses were completed.

In the arrangements for allocating new houses none were to be reserved for overcrowded families, but a "point" system was adopted in which the highest separate award (9 points) would be given to applicants living in houses certified as very bad, those sharing a house to receive 8 points and overcrowded families 5 points. In other respects the three categories were to have equal awards.

The system has the merit of simplicity, but experience has shown that it has also serious disadvantages.

The number of new houses completed during the year by the Local Authority was 25; the number erected by private persons was 12.

*Hospitals.*—National Health Service (determination of Regional Hospital Areas) Order. In accordance with this Order, which came into operation on December 18th, 1946, England and Wales were divided into 14 administrative areas, for each of which a Regional Hospital Board was to function for the administration of hospital and specialist services under the Act.

The Borough and Rural District of Saffron Walden are included in the East Anglian Regional Hospital area.

Also included in the East Anglian Regional area are:—the administrative counties of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Isle of Ely, Norfolk, Stoke of Peterborough, Suffolk East, and Suffolk West; County boroughs of Great Yarmouth, Ipswich and Norwich; part of the administrative County of Hertford comprising urban district of Royston; part of the administrative County of Lincoln; parts of Kesteven comprising borough of Stamford; urban district of Bourne, and rural district of South Kesteven; part of Rutland comprising rural district of Ketton.

The administrative County of Essex, with the exception of the Saffron Walden Districts, is in the North-East Metropolitan Regional Hospital Area.

Twelve Hospital Management Committees have since been set up in the East Anglian Regional Hospital Board area. Saffron Walden hospitals come under the Cambridge and Newmarket Hospital Management Committee.

The number of patients admitted from the Borough to the Saffron Walden Isolation Hospital during the year 1947 was 15.

*Nursing Treatment Centres and Clinics.*—There were no important changes in these services during the year.

## PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASES

During the general prevalence of Acute Poliomyelitis in the summer months, owing to shortage of staff in the Essex Hospitals it had not been found practicable to set up a special unit to which all cases of the disease might be admitted. But in the Saffron Walden area, it was considered advisable to arrange for the isolation of all cases as soon as possible, and as diagnosis in the earliest stages of infection was often impossible it was decided that the "suspects" should also be admitted to hospital.

Efforts to arrange for hospital treatment within the County were unsuccessful, but through the assistance of the Medical Officer of Health for Cambridge, provision was made for Saffron Walden cases in Cambridgeshire hospitals.

Subsequently four patients were admitted to the Cambridge Infectious Diseases Hospital. Two of these developed definite signs of acute poliomyelitis but permanent paralysis did not develop in either case.

An alternative provision, made available in the area, was a specially trained team of nurses at White Lodge Hospital, Newmarket, which was prepared to give temporary help in isolation hospitals anywhere in East Anglia.

### *Notifiable Diseases (other than Tuberculosis):*

Measles 7

Whooping Cough 4

Poliomyelitis 2

Pneumonia 2

Erysipelas 2

Scarlet Fever 1

*Diphtheria Immunisation.*—The number of children immunised by the Medical Officer of Health during the year was 243. No record of those privately treated is available.

*Tuberculosis.*—Two cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were notified—males aged 26 and 60.

One male aged 60 died of pulmonary tuberculosis.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

*Milk Supply.*—The Testing and Advisory Scheme is carried out under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and details of the procedure have been explained to all Local Authorities in the various Ministry of Health circulars

Under the Scheme, all milk delivered from farms is sampled and tested; a special form of test being used which has been adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for the specific purpose of determining the keeping quality of milk.

In cases where unsatisfactory results are obtained, the Executive Committee send an Inspector to the farms to ascertain why the milk is defective, and to suggest remedies.

While the testing is done in Trade Laboratories, and Local Authorities are not concerned in the actual sampling, in order to secure co-operation all unsatisfactory cases are reported to the Local Authority, whose Inspector accompanies the representative of the War Agricultural Executive Committee on his advisory visits to the farm in question.

In addition to the milk testing supervised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, routine sampling work is undertaken by the Essex County Council. Under the County Scheme at least six samples per year are obtained from farms licenced to produce T.T. or Accredited Milk. If unsatisfactory results are obtained the number is exceeded. Where milk is supplied to schools, one sample per school term is obtained at the school, and submitted to various tests. Samples are also taken by the Sanitary Inspector.

The responsibilities of Local Authorities, under the Milk and Dairies Orders, are not affected by either of these Schemes, but they are advised to concentrate chiefly on the methods of handling, processing and conveyance of milk; buildings being of secondary importance.

*Sanitary Inspection of the Area.*—The Sanitary Inspector presents the following Report on the Inspection of the area during the year:—

Total number of Inspections	...	...	...	...	1540
Nuisances or Defects found	...	...	...	...	1232
Complaints received	...	...	...	...	512
Informal (written) Notices	...	...	...	...	210
Statutory Notices served	...	...	...	...	4
Nuisances and Defects remedied	...	...	...	...	1190
Houses Inspected	...	...	...	...	84
Rouses Re-inspected	...	...	...	...	35
Premises disinfected	...	...	...	...	19
Schools disinfected	...	...	...	...	2
Inspection of 2 Government Controlled Slaughterhouses	...	...	...	...	606
Inspection of Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	27
Inspection of Dairies and Cowsheds	...	...	...	...	24
Cases of overcrowding abated	...	...	...	...	25
Samples of Water	...	...	...	...	2

*Unsound Food:*

Food in Tins, Jars, Bottles or Packets	...	...	3286 Containers
Sugar	...	...	28 lbs.
Tea	...	...	5½ lbs.
Flour	...	...	69 lbs.
Macaroni	...	...	60 lbs.
Chocolates	...	...	56 lbs.
Biscuits	...	...	8 lbs.
Black Pudding	...	...	16 lbs.
White Pudding	...	...	14 lbs.
Potatoes	...	...	1 ton
Prunes	...	...	30 lbs.
Boiled Sweets	...	...	70 lbs.
Fish Cakes	...	...	209 lbs.
Liver Sausages	...	...	14 lbs.
Meat Pies	...	...	75 lbs.
Eggs	...	...	231

*Food handed over for Manure purposes:*

Fish	...	...	197 stone
Shrimps	...	...	5 galls.

*Food handed to Salvage Department, Ministry of Food:*

Milk Powder	...	...	147 lbs.
Milk	...	...	48 tins
Beef	...	...	94 lbs.

## HOUSING STATISTICS

*Number of new houses erected during the year:—*

(a) By Local Authorities	...	...	25
(b) By other bodies or persons	...	...	12

*Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year:—*

Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	84
Number of inspections made for the purpose...	...	...	145
Number of houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	7
Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	11



*Remedy of Defects with Service of Notices:—*

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence  
of action by the Local Authority ... 6 houses closed

*Housing Act, 1936. Part 4. Overcrowding:—*

1.	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	...	18
	Number of families dwelling therein	...	24
	Number of persons dwelling therein	...	98
2.	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year		14
3.	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	...	25
	Number of persons concerned in such cases	...	132

*Rat Destruction.*—The Operator paid 386 visits to Council property, 2,664 visits to private property and 146 visits to business premises. Dead rats collected 529. The Slade had several treatments.

*Eradication of Bed Bugs.*—Eight houses were found to be infested with bed bugs.

*Meat.*—There are two Government Controlled Slaughter-houses in the district. The number of inspections made by the Inspector during the year, and including visits at the time of slaughter, was 606.

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED

Number inspected	...	...	912	347	2136	218
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*All diseases except Tuberculosis.*

Whole carcasses condemned	...	3	2	4	9
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	...	298	12	38	49
Percentage of number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	...	33.00	3.11	1.96	26.60

*Tuberculosis only.*

Whole carcasses condemned	...	9	1	1	8
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	...	93	2	0	1
Percentage of number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	...	11.29	.86	.04	4.11

*Condemned.*

Meat	...	...	...	...	9973 lbs.
Offals	...	...	...	...	8150½ lbs.

*Adulteration, etc.:—*

*Ice Cream.*—Six persons are registered under the Essex County Council Act, 1933, for the sale of ice cream.

## 1.—INSPECTION OF FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES.

Including inspections made by the Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances

Premises (1)	Number of		
	Inspections (2)	Written Notices (3)	Occupiers prosecuted (4)
<b>54 Factories</b> ... .. (including Factory Laundries)	42	32	—
<b>Workshops</b> ... .. (Including Workshop Laundries)	—	—	—
<b>Workplaces</b> ... ..	—	—	—
<b>Total</b> ... ..	42	32	Nil

## 2.—DEFECTS FOUND IN FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES

Particulars (1)	Number of Defects				
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred to H.M. Inspector (4)		
<i>Nuisances under the Public Health Acts :—</i>					
Want of cleanliness ... ..	5	5	—	—	
Want of Ventilation ... ..	1	1	—	—	
Overcrowding ... ..	—	—	—	—	
Want of drainage of floors ... ..	1	1	—	—	
Other nuisances ... ..	—	—	—	—	
Sanitary accommodation {	insufficient ...	7	7	—	—
	unsuitable or				
	defective	14	14	—	—
	not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—
<i>Offences under the Factory and Workshop Acts :—</i>					
Illegal occupation of underground bakehouse (s. 101) ... ..	—	—	—	—	
Other offences ... ..	—	—	—	—	
(Excluding offences relating to outwork and offences under the Sections mentioned in the Schedule to the Ministry of Health (Factories and Workshops Transfer of Powers) Order, 1921)					
Total ... ..	29	29	—	—	